

2020 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

By Mayor Chris Moore

Lowell, Arkansas

Good evening. I am honored to be standing before you this evening. I would like to thank Mr. Raymond Burns, and his staff, from the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce for being here tonight. I would also like to welcome the city officials in attendance, the city employees, and most importantly, the citizens of Lowell

In 2019, we accomplished many great things with the help of many people. I use the word “WE” in giving credit for the successes of this year, quite literally. The word we is centrally located in the spelling of Lowell, and we want to make sure the people living here know that they are at the center of our progress.

The progress I talk about tonight is evident in three major areas including, Economic and Community Development; Municipal Services; and our updated City Ordinances.

A growing business community is a growing city, and in 2019, we issued 61 NEW business licenses, to places that many of you enjoy daily.

These businesses include places like Harps, JT's Tri-Tip Grill, 7-Brew, Paco's Tires, and Speedy Splash Car Wash. All of this while many businesses including J.B. Hunt, our largest employer, continues to expand. Additionally, we added 22 new home businesses and a food truck court with several other food trucks positioned around town. This alone is a testament that our city is primed for small start ups and is encouraging to small business.

During the summer, with the help of our great partners at the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, we launched and participated in a community action plan called Vision 100. This plan surveyed what you, the people who choose to live, work and play in our city, want to see the community's future.

We took your feedback and will work to implement this into our future growth plan. But the work doesn't stop there, we will continue to survey and listen to what our residents want so that we can make Lowell a cohesive and connected community for years to come.

In September, Central Research announced plans to develop more than 30 acres on the southwest corner of West Monroe Avenue and Interstate 49, which has sat vacant for nearly 20 years. The Lowell based business plans to build a multi-use development that will not only be home to its new headquarters but will also bring many jobs to that side of town.

People continue to move to our city. The updated population numbers we received in 2019 showed that we are approximately 9,500 strong, that is just under a 30% increase population from 2010. This means we have to offer more places for newcomers to live and places for their children to receive quality education. The City welcomed 3 New subdivisions in 2019, while Lowell elementary started a 52,000 foot remodel and expansion.

We continued to develop our Kathleen Johnson Memorial park. We recently added a Veteran Memorial to honor our Nations heroes. A new water line was also installed there to continue building our infrastructure in the park.

The City hosted over 700 participants for the 2019 Easter Egg Hunt, our largest turnout ever for this event, something that we and local faith leaders are very proud of. The 43rd Annual

Mudtown Days saw its biggest crowd to date with many people giving us positive feedback. Last year's festival was so popular that we are already completely booked up on the food and beverage vendors for our 2020 Mudtown days.

With the help of many volunteers, we successfully launched a Christmas parade and tree lighting event in our downtown area. This was our first downtown based event in over 15 years, it exposed many people to this area of town. We hope to have even more lights and activities for people to enjoy next year with the help of our A&P commission.

On top of the great advances we have made this year, the City experienced several severe storms in October, including the widest tornados in Benton County's history. We witnessed our emergency service personnel step up to help our neighboring communities. I would like to recognize the Lowell Fire

Department for their work to assist the City of Rogers in its time of need.

We witnessed Fire Chief Pete Melnicki greatly increase the effectiveness of his department. Under his leadership, the fire department created a training regimen to better prepare our fire fighters to efficiently save lives. Chief Melnicki also took on the duties of Fire Marshall as well as his own day to day duties as Chief. Lastly, he and the regional Chiefs have readdressed the plans for a regional disaster response. All this means more fire and EMS protection for the citizens of Lowell.

The police department has reorganized and updated its facilities, under the direction of Chief Tim Kuth. He has led his team to place more police officers on patrol without increasing the City budget. Chief Kuth has also reorganized the shift structure, while adopting the Animal Control Department back into the Police Department. This means the Animal Welfare

officers can also act as patrol officers. His staff has attended 2,700 hours of training, which was an increase of 40% over the previous year.

We made a commitment to streamline this government, and over the last year the results have been astounding.

We worked to lower fees and permit costs so those who wish to build and expand businesses, are not turned away but instead, are attracted by what we have to offer.

The City has seen an increase in the building permits issued for 2019. There was a 28% increase in commercial building permits and a 43% increase in residential building permits.

We have enacted an ordinance to remove reinspection fees while adopting rules which will create efficiency when repairing sewer lines. Our planning staff has worked diligently to make sure our ordinances and zoning are fostering continued growth

within our city by allowing residents to have smaller lot sizes if they choose to do so, ultimately increasing our density.

In the last year, I have watched every single employee of this City work towards excellence. I would be remiss not to thank each and every one of them for their hard work in meeting our goals, but we cannot do it alone. I would like to challenge each citizen of Lowell to get involved by something as simple as volunteering at the Animal Shelter or by sitting on a committee. Attending regular meetings to provide feedback is also a vital role. Participation in what we do here at the City is key to a successful and transparent government. While we still have goals ahead to move forward, I am pleased and excited by the strides we have made to date. I restate my commitment to have accountable government which is the most effective and as fiscally responsible as we can be.

With the progress, and the results we have seen in the last year, I know our mutual success is within reach in 2020! Thank you and God bless.